

II. REMARKS

In the Office Action dated February 20, 2003, the Examiner has identified two groups of claims, namely group I containing claims 1-15, and 35-40, and group II containing claims 16-34 and 41, as being subject to restriction or election requirement, on the basis that they are respectively directed to two patentably distinct inventions.

In response to the Examiner's requisition under 35 U.S.C. §121, the Applicant formally elects claims 1-15 and 35-40 of Group I, for prosecution on the merits.

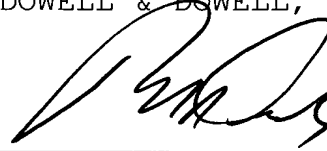
Accordingly the Applicant has withdrawn claims 16-34 and 41 from the patent application. The Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue any or all of the non-elected claims in a divisional application that may be filed prior to the issuance to patent of the present application.

III. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is submitted that claims 1-15 and 35-40 are in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 1-15 and 35-40 at an early date is solicited.

If the claims of the application are not believed to be in full condition for allowance, for any reason, the Applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims or in making constructive suggestions so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,
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